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TAGS: [KISL](#) [PGOV](#) [SCUL](#) [GM](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKISH MUSLIM ASSOCIATION LEADER ON INTEGRATION  
IN GERMANY

Classified By: CDA John Cloud. Reason: 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (U) Summary. The leader of Ditib, Germany's largest Turkish/Muslim organization, which is tied closely to the Turkish state, sees opponents of Turkish EU accession as at least partly behind the caricature controversy and other developments that have complicated the integration of Turkish immigrants into German society. Ditib is pleased with its dialogue with other religions and hopes this will dispel at least some of the misunderstanding. Embassy will continue to work with Ditib as part of its outreach to Germany's Muslims.  
End Summary.

¶2. (U) Ridvan Cakir, Chairman of Ditib, Germany's largest Muslim organization and also its largest Turkish organization, held an introductory meeting with Ambassador Timken on April 4. Ditib is affiliated with and largely funded by the Turkish Ministry of Religious Affairs but operates within Germany as a charitable association. Many of its employees are Turkish government officials, including Cakir, who has diplomatic status. It represents, according to Cakir, the members of 876 Turkish-Muslim community centers (710 of which also include a mosque). Cakir claimed that 76.4 percent of Germany's Muslims are affiliated with Ditib through these centers. After outlining the social and cultural services Ditib provides, including its German language courses and other programs designed to facilitate integration, Cakir offered his view of the state of integration in Germany.

¶3. (C) According to Cakir, Ditib's integration programs are having a decreasing impact because of what he labeled the rise of racist and radical attitudes in Germany. He attributed this rise to persons who are opposed to Turkey's accession to the EU. (Comment: Cakir's comments are likely to be influenced by Ditib's close affiliation to the Turkish state. End Comment.) Cakir maintained that the controversy about the caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed was a manifestation of such opposition and that it had only made integration of Muslims in Germany more difficult. Ditib had encouraged its members to respond lawfully and calmly. Cakir said the appeal contributed to the peaceful response in Germany to the controversy, but complained that at least some Germans had behaved criminally. Six Ditib-affiliated community centers had been attacked since the caricature conflict began: there had been three arson attempts, a gun attack, and the defacement of two mosques. Cakir also argued that calls for a citizenship test in Germany for specifically Muslim applicants also cast doubt on the "honesty" of Germany's asserted interest in integration.

¶4. (C) In response to questions from the Ambassador, Cakir said he believed that the attacks had been carried out by far-right/neo-Nazi groups that also had anti-Semitic leanings. The PKK, he suggested, might also be a factor. The police were investigating all the cases, but he was

concerned that the police sometimes regard such cases as "nuisances" and not serious crimes. By contrast, German politicians appear to be genuinely concerned about such attacks.

¶5. (U) Asked who were Ditib's best German partners, Cakir pointed to Ditib's dialogues with the Evangelical and Catholic churches, and its developing dialogue with the Jewish community. There were both contacts at the local level between individual churches and mosques, but also regular dialogue with the Evangelical Church at the state level, with Catholic bishops, and contact with leaders from both churches at the national level. Such dialogue would have a positive effect in both the Christian and Muslim communities, Cakir believed.

¶6. (U) The Ambassador and Cakir discussed at length various ideas for contact between the Embassy and the Muslim community and considered ways to promote broader dialogue between the American and German Muslim communities. Cakir said he was very open to cooperation with the Embassy and that Ditib would offer its support for dialogue and contact. Post will follow up on these ideas.

¶7. (C) Comment: Given its relationship to the Turkish state, it is not surprising that Ditib would see the caricature controversy in terms of its effect on Turkey's EU accession. In view of the role of radical Muslims in spreading and heightening the controversy, we would be skeptical about Cakir's claims. At least in Germany, no connection was made between the two. End Comment.

TIMKEN JR